

Title of Paper: A Dying Lake, A Living Nyanja, and Other Bodies of Water (which is the first chapter of the book I'm working on, summarized below).

**Summary of Paper:** I plan to pre-circulate a draft of the first chapter of my book, *Littoral Politics: Submerged Histories of an Inland African Sea*. Located between the dry world of humans and the wet world of fish, the littoral generates dynamic and sometimes confusing mixtures of people, fish, and ideas about how best to organize life at the shore. These are places of heightened prospects for physical and economic mobility mediated by alternative moralities of sexual and economic exchange and competing valuations of space and the material and metaphorical stuff of life, including fish. Based on my long-term historically-rooted and ethnographically-engaged research in island and mainland fishing sites in Uganda since 2007, this project engages the productive liminality of the littoral to offer a fresh account of a system too often reproduced in scholarly and popular accounts as a "sick giant" still "in the heart of darkness." *Littoral Politics: Submerged Histories of an Inland African Sea* is a book about the work that fish and fishing do to structure and fuel human culture and how vernacular, managerial, and scientific materials and methods of working with fish generate ontologically distinct fisheries, bodies of water, and concepts of wellbeing along these shores over time. By foregrounding women's work with diverse species and forms of fish - both indigenous and introduced - alongside linked social and ecological transformations, *Littoral Politics* re-theorizes received wisdoms about gender, marginality, and sustainability around Africa's largest body of freshwater and the world's largest freshwater fishery.

**Short Bio:** Jennifer Lee Johnson is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Purdue University. She holds a PhD from the University of Michigan and completed a postdoctoral fellowship with the Program in Agrarian Studies at Yale University. Johnson's research is historically rooted, ethnographically engaged, and focused at the confluence of gender, illegality, and the ontological politics of sustainability in and around Africa's largest body of freshwater where she has conducted long-term field research since 2007. Her most recent publications have appeared in the journals *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* and *Aquatic Ecosystem Health and Management*, and in the edited volumes *Subsistence under Capitalism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Mc-Gill-Queen's, 2016) and *Landscape, Environment and Technology in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa* (Routledge, 2012). Johnson's current book project examines how stories about the past shape and are shaped by contemporary environmental policy debates, and how alternative – but no less accurate – accounts of linked transformations in social and ecological life may inspire more livable futures.



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